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# Mornings in Florence

## IV.
## THE VAULTED BOOK.

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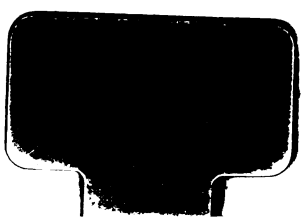

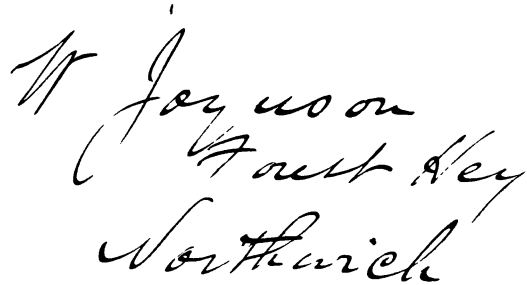

# MORNINGS IN FLORENCE.

# MORNINGS IN FLORENCE:

BEING

## SIMPLE STUDIES

OF

# CHRISTIAN ART,

## FOR ENGLISH TRAVELLERS.

BY

JOHN RUSKIN, LL.D.,

HONORARY STUDENT OF CHRIST CHURCH,
AND SLADE PROFESSOR OF FINE ART, OXFORD.

IV.

*THE VAULTED BOOK.*

SECOND EDITION.

GEORGE ALLEN,
SUNNYSIDE, ORPINGTON, KENT.

1882.

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## THE FOURTH MORNING.

### THE VAULTED BOOK.

AS early as may be this morning, let us look for a minute or two into the cathedral :—I was going to say, entering by one of the side doors of the aisles ;—but we can't do anything else, which perhaps might not strike you unless you were thinking specially of it. There are no transept doors; and one never wanders round to the desolate front.

From either of the side doors, a few paces will bring you to the middle of the nave, and to the point opposite the middle of the third arch from the west end; where you will find yourself—if well in the mid-nave—standing on a circular slab of green porphyry, which marks the former place of the grave of the bishop Zenobius. The larger inscription, on the wide circle of the floor outside of you, records the translation of his body; the smaller one round the stone at your feet—"quiescimus, domum hanc quum adimus ultimam"—is a painful truth, I suppose, to travellers like us, who never rest anywhere now, if we can help it.

Resting here, at any rate, for a few minutes, look up to the whitewashed vaulting of the compartment of the roof next the west end.

You will see nothing whatever in it worth looking at. Nevertheless, look a little longer.

But the longer you look, the less you will understand why I tell you to look. It is nothing but a whitewashed ceiling: vaulted indeed,—but so is many a tailor's garret window, for that matter. Indeed, now that you have looked steadily for a minute or so, and are used to the form of the arch, it seems to become so small that you can almost fancy it the ceiling of a good-sized lumber-room in an attic.

Having attained to this modest conception of it, carry your eyes back to the similar vault of the second compartment, nearer you. Very little further contemplation will reduce that also to the similitude of a moderately-sized attic. And then, resolving to bear, if possible—for it is worth while,—the cramp in your neck for another quarter of a minute, look right up to the third vault, over your head; which, if not, in the said quarter of a minute, reducible in imagination to a tailor's garret, will at least sink, like the two others, into the semblance of a common arched ceiling, of no serious magnitude or majesty.

Then, glance quickly down from it to the floor, and round at the space, (included between the four pillars), which that vault covers.

It is sixty feet square,*—four hundred square yards of pavement,—and I believe you will have to look up again more than once or twice, before you can convince yourself that the mean-looking roof is swept indeed over all that twelfth part of an acre. And still less, if I mistake not, will you, without slow proof, believe, when you turn yourself round towards the east end, that the narrow niche (it really looks scarcely more than a niche) which occupies, beyond the dome, the position of our northern choirs, is indeed the unnarrowed elongation of the nave, whose breadth extends round you like a frozen lake. From which experiments and comparisons, your conclusion, I think, will be, and I am sure it ought to be, that the most studious ingenuity could not produce a design for the interior of a building which should more completely hide its extent, and throw away every common advantage of its magnitude, than this of the Duomo of Florence.

Having arrived at this, I assure you, quite securely tenable conclusion, we will quit the cathedral by the western door, for once; and, as quickly as we can walk, return to the Green cloister of Sta. Maria Novella; and place ourselves on the south side of it, so as to see as

* Approximately. Thinking I could find the dimensions of the duomo anywhere, I only paced it myself,—and cannot, at this moment, lay my hand on English measurements of it.

much as we can of the entrance, on the opposite side, to the so-called 'Spanish Chapel.'

There is, indeed, within the opposite cloister, an arch of entrance, plain enough. But no chapel, whatever, externally manifesting itself as worth entering. No walls, or gable, or dome, raised above the rest of the outbuildings—only two windows with traceries opening into the cloister; and one story of inconspicuous building above. You can't conceive there should be any effect of *magnitude* produced in the interior, however it has been vaulted or decorated. It may be pretty, but it cannot possibly look large.

Entering it, nevertheless, you will be surprised at the effect of height, and disposed to fancy that the circular window cannot surely be the same you saw outside, looking so low. I had to go out again, myself, to make sure that it was.

And gradually, as you let the eye follow the sweep of the vaulting arches, from the small central keystone-boss, with the Lamb carved on it, to the broad capitals of the hexagonal pillars at the angles,—there will form itself in your mind, I think, some impression not only of vastness in the building, but of great daring in the builder; and at last, after closely following out the lines of a fresco or two, and looking up and up again to the coloured vaults, it will become to you literally one of the grandest places you ever entered, roofed without a central pillar. You

will begin to wonder that human daring ever achieved anything so magnificent.

But just go out again into the cloister, and recover knowledge of the facts. It is nothing like so large as the blank arch which at home we filled with brickbats or leased for a gin-shop under the last railway we made to carry coals to Newcastle. And if you pace the floor it covers, you will find it is three feet less one way, and thirty feet less the other, than that single square of the cathedral which was roofed like a tailor's loft,—accurately, for I did measure here, myself, the floor of the Spanish chapel is fifty-seven feet by thirty-two.

I hope, after this experience, that you will need no farther conviction of the first law of noble building, that grandeur depends on proportion and design—not, except in a quite secondary degree, on magnitude. Mere size has, indeed, under all disadvantage, some definite value ; and so has mere splendour. Disappointed as you may be, or at least ought to be, at first, by St. Peter's, in the end you will feel its size,—and its brightness. These are all you *can* feel in it—it is nothing more than the pump-room at Leamington built bigger ;—but the bigness tells at last : and Corinthian pillars whose capitals alone are ten feet high, and their acanthus leaves, three feet six long, give you a serious conviction of the infallibility of the Pope, and the fallibility of the

wretched Corinthians, who invented the style indeed, but built with capitals no bigger than hand-baskets.

Vastness *has* thus its value. But the glory of architecture is to be—whatever you wish it to be,—lovely, or grand, or comfortable,—on such terms as it can easily obtain. Grand, by proportion—lovely, by imagination—comfortable, by ingenuity — secure, by honesty: with such materials and in such space as you have got to give it.

Grand—by proportion, I said; but ought to have said by *dis*proportion. Beauty is given by the relation of parts—size, by their comparison. The first secret in getting the impression of size in this chapel is the *dis*proportion between pillar and arch. You take the pillar for granted,—it is thick, strong, and fairly high above your head. You look to the vault springing from it—and it soars away, nobody knows where.

Another great, but more subtle secret is in the *in*equality and immeasurability of the curved lines; and the hiding of the form by the colour.

To begin, the room, I said, is fifty-seven feet wide, and only thirty-two deep. It is thus nearly one-third larger in the direction across the line of entrance, which gives to every arch, pointed and round, throughout the roof, a different spring from its neighbours.

The vaulting ribs have the simplest of all pro-

files—that of a chamfered beam. I call it simpler than even that of a square beam; for in barking a log you cheaply get your chamfer, and nobody cares whether the level is alike on each side: but you must take a larger tree, and use much more work to get a square. And it is the same with stone.

And this profile is—fix the conditions of it, therefore, in your mind—venerable in the history of mankind as the origin of all Gothic tracery-mouldings; venerable in the history of the Christian Church as that of the roof ribs, both of the lower church of Assisi, bearing the scroll of the precepts of St. Francis, and here at Florence, bearing the scroll of the faith of St. Dominic. If you cut it out in paper, and cut the corners off farther and farther, at every cut, you will produce a sharper profile of rib, connected in architectural use with differently treated styles. But the entirely venerable form is the massive one in which the angle of the beam is merely, as it were, secured and completed in stability by removing its too sharp edge.

Well, the vaulting ribs, as in Giotto's vault, then, have here, under their painting, this rude profile: but do not suppose the vaults are simply the shells cast over them. Look how the ornamental borders fall on the capitals! The plaster receives all sorts of indescribably accommodating shapes—the painter contracting and stopping his design

upon it as it happens to be convenient. You can't measure anything; you can't exhaust; you can't grasp,—except one simple ruling idea, which a child can grasp, if it is interested and intelligent: namely, that the room has four sides with four tales told upon them; and the roof four quarters, with another four tales told on those. And each history in the sides has its correspondent history in the roof. Generally, in good Italian decoration, the roof represents constant, or essential facts; the walls, consecutive histories arising out of them, or leading up to them. Thus here, the roof represents in front of you, in its main quarter, the Resurrection—the cardinal fact of Christianity; opposite, (above, behind you), the Ascension; on your left hand, the descent of the Holy Spirit; on your right, Christ's perpetual presence with His Church, symbolized by His appearance on the Sea of Galilee to the disciples in the storm.

The correspondent walls represent: under the first quarter, (the Resurrection), the story of the Crucifixion; under the second quarter, (the Ascension), the preaching after that departure, that Christ will return—symbolized here in the Dominican church by the consecration of St. Dominic; under the third quarter, (the descent of the Holy Spirit), the disciplining power of human virtue and wisdom; under the fourth quarter, (St. Peter's Ship), the authority and government of the State and Church.

The order of these subjects, chosen by the Dominican monks themselves, was sufficiently comprehensive to leave boundless room for the invention of the painter. The execution of it was first entrusted to Taddeo Gaddi, the best architectural master of Giotto's school, who painted the four quarters of the roof entirely, but with no great brilliancy of invention, and was beginning to go down one of the sides, when, luckily, a man of stronger brain, his friend, came from Siena. Taddeo thankfully yielded the room to him; he joined his own work to that of his less able friend in an exquisitely pretty and complimentary way; throwing his own greater strength into it, not competitively, but gradually and helpfully. When, however, he had once got himself well joined, and softly, to the more simple work, he put his own force on with a will; and produced the most noble piece of pictorial philosophy * and divinity existing in Italy.

This pretty, and, according to all evidence by me attainable, entirely true, tradition has been all but lost, among the ruins of fair old Florence, by the industry of modern mason-critics—who, without exception, labouring under the primal (and necessarily unconscious) disadvantage of not

* There is no philosophy *taught* either by the school of Athens, or Michael Angelo's 'Last Judgment;' and the 'Disputa' is merely a graceful assemblage of authorities, the effects of such authority not being shown.

knowing good work from bad, and never, therefore, knowing a man by his hand or his thoughts, would be in any case sorrowfully at the mercy of mistakes in a document; but are tenfold more deceived by their own vanity, and delight in overthrowing a received idea, if they can.

Farther; as every fresco of this early date has been retouched again and again, and often painted half over,—and as, if there has been the least care or respect for the old work in the restorer, he will now and then follow the old lines and match the old colours carefully in some places, while he puts in clearly recognizable work of his own in others,—two critics, of whom one knows the first man's work well, and the other the last's, will contradict each other to almost any extent on the securest grounds. And there is then no safe refuge for an uninitiated person but in the old tradition, which, if not literally true, is founded assuredly on some root of fact which you are likely to get at, if ever, through *it* only. So that my general directions to all young people going to Florence or Rome would be very short: "Know your first volume of Vasari, and your two first books of Livy; look about you, and don't talk, nor listen to talking."

On those terms, you may know, entering this chapel, that in Michael Angelo's time, all Florence attributed these frescoes to Taddeo Gaddi and Simon Memmi.

I have studied neither of these artists myself with any speciality of care, and cannot tell you, positively, anything about them or their works. But I know good work from bad, as a cobbler knows leather, and I can tell you positively the quality of these frescoes, and their relation to contemporary panel pictures; whether authentically ascribed to Gaddi, Memmi, or any one else, it is for the Florentine Academy to decide.

The roof, and the north side, down to the feet of the horizontal line of sitting figures, were originally third-rate work of the school of Giotto; the rest of the chapel was originally, and most of it is still, magnificent work of the school of Siena. The roof and north side have been heavily repainted in many places; the rest is faded and injured, but not destroyed in its most essential qualities. And now, farther, you must bear with just a little bit of tormenting history of painters.

There were two Gaddis, father and son,—Taddeo and Angelo. And there were two Memmis, brothers, —Simon and Philip.

I daresay you will find, in the modern books, that Simon's real name was Peter, and Philip's real name was Bartholomew; and Angelo's real name was Taddeo, and Taddeo's real name was Angelo; and Memmi's real name was Gaddi, and Gaddi's real name was Memmi. You may find out all that at your leisure, afterwards, if you like. What it is important for you to know here, in the

Spanish Chapel, is only this much that follows: —There were certainly two persons once called Gaddi, both rather stupid in religious matters and high art; but one of them, I don't know or care which, a true decorative painter of the most exquisite skill, a perfect architect, an amiable person, and a great lover of pretty domestic life. Vasari says this was the father, Taddeo. He built the Ponte Vecchio; and the old stones of it—which if you ever look at anything on the Ponte Vecchio but the shops, you may still see (above those wooden pent-houses) with the Florentine shield—were so laid by him that they are unshaken to this day.

He painted an exquisite series of frescoes at Assisi from the Life of Christ; in which,—just to show you what the man's nature is,—when the Madonna has given Christ into Simeon's arms, she can't help holding out her own arms to him, and saying, (visibly,) "Won't you come back to mamma?" The child laughs his answer—"I love *you*, mamma; but I'm quite happy just now."

Well; he, or he and his son together, painted these four quarters of the roof of the Spanish Chapel. They were very probably much retouched afterwards by Antonio Veneziano, or whomsoever Messrs. Crowe and Cavalcasella please; but that architecture in the descent of the Holy Ghost *is* by the man who painted the north transept of Assisi, and there need be no

more talk about the matter,—for you never catch a restorer doing his old architecture right again. And farther, the ornamentation of the vaulting ribs *is* by the man who painted the Entombment, No. 31 in the Galerie des Grands Tableaux, in the catalogue of the Academy for 1874. Whether that picture is Taddeo Gaddi's or not, as stated in the catalogue, I do not know; but I know the vaulting ribs of the Spanish Chapel are painted by the same hand.

Again: of the two brothers Memmi, one or other, I don't know or care which, had an ugly way of turning the eyes of his figures up and their mouths down; of which you may see an entirely disgusting example in the four saints attributed to Filippo Memmi on the cross wall of the north (called always in Murray's guide the south, because he didn't notice the way the church was built) transept of Assisi. You may, however, also see the way the mouth goes down in the much repainted, but still characteristic No. 9 in the Uffizii.*

Now I catch the wring and verjuice of this brother again and again, among the minor heads

* This picture bears the inscription (I quote from the French catalogue, not having verified it myself), "Simon Martini, et Lippus Memmi de Senis me pinxerunt." I have no doubt whatever, myself, that the two brothers worked together on these frescoes of the Spanish Chapel: but that most of the Limbo is Philip's, and the Paradise, scarcely with his interference, Simon's.

of the lower frescoes in this Spanish Chapel. The head of the Queen beneath Noah, in the Limbo—(see below) is unmistakable.

Farther: one of the two brothers, I don't care which, had a way of painting leaves; of which you may see a notable example in the rod in the hand of Gabriel in that same picture of the Annunciation in the Uffizii. No Florentine painter, or any other, ever painted leaves as well as that, till you get down to Sandro Botticelli, who did them much better. But the man who painted that rod in the hand of Gabriel, painted the rod in the right hand of Logic in the Spanish Chapel,—and nobody else in Florence, or the world, *could.*

Farther (and this is the last of the antiquarian business): you see that the frescoes on the roof are, on the whole, dark, with much blue and red in them, the white spaces coming out strongly. This is the characteristic colouring of the partially defunct school of Giotto, becoming merely decorative, and passing into a colourist school which connected itself afterwards with the Venetians. There is an exquisite example of all its specialities in the little Annunciation in the Uffizii, No. 14, attributed to Angelo Gaddi, in which you see the Madonna is stupid, and the angel stupid, but the colour of the whole, as a piece of painted glass, lovely; and the execution exquisite,—at once a painter's and jeweller's; with subtle sense of

chiaroscuro underneath; (note the delicate shadow of the Madonna's arm across her breast).

The head of this school was (according to Vasari) Taddeo Gaddi; and henceforward, without further discussion, I shall speak of him as the painter of the roof of the Spanish Chapel,—not without suspicion, however, that his son Angelo may hereafter turn out to have been the better decorator, and the painter of the frescoes from the life of Christ in the north transept of Assisi,—with such assistance as his son or scholars might give—and such change or destruction as time, Antonio Veneziano, or the last operations of the Tuscan railroad company, may have effected on them.

On the other hand, you see that the frescoes on the walls are of paler colours, the blacks coming out of these clearly, rather than the whites; but the pale colours, especially, for instance, the whole of the Duomo of Florence in that on your right, very tender and lovely. Also, you may feel a tendency to express much with outline, and draw, more than paint, in the most interesting parts; while in the duller ones, nasty green and yellow tones come out, which prevent the effect of the whole from being very pleasant. These characteristics belong, on the whole, to the school of Siena; and they indicate here the work *assuredly* of a man of vast power and most refined education, whom I shall call without further discussion,

during the rest of this and the following morning's study, Simon Memmi.

And of the grace and subtlety with which he joined his work to that of the Gaddis, you may judge at once by comparing the Christ standing on the fallen gate of the Limbo, with the Christ in the Resurrection above. Memmi has retained the dress and imitated the general effect of the figure in the roof so faithfully that you suspect no difference of mastership—nay, he has even raised the foot in the same awkward way: but you will find Memmi's foot delicately drawn—Taddeo's hard and rude: and all the folds of Memmi's drapery cast with unbroken grace and complete gradations of shade, while Taddeo's are rigid and meagre; also in the heads, generally Taddeo's type of face is square in feature, with massive and inelegant clusters or volutes of hair and beard; but Memmi's delicate and long in feature, with much divided and flowing hair, often arranged with exquisite precision, as in the finest Greek coins. Examine successively in this respect only the heads of Adam, Abel, Methuselah, and Abraham, in the Limbo, and you will not confuse the two designers any more. I have not had time to make out more than the principal figures in the Limbo, of which indeed the entire dramatic power is centred in the Adam and Eve. The latter dressed as a nun, in her fixed gaze on Christ, with her hands clasped, is of extreme

beauty: and however feeble the work of any early painter may be, in its decent and grave inoffensiveness it guides the imagination unerringly to a certain point. How far you are yourself capable of filling up what is left untold, and conceiving, as a reality, Eve's first look on this her child, depends on no painter's skill, but on your own understanding. Just above Eve is Abel, bearing the lamb: and behind him, Noah, between his wife and Shem: behind them, Abraham, between Isaac and Ishmael; (turning from Ishmael to Isaac); behind these, Moses, between Aaron and David. I have not identified the others, though I find the white-bearded figure behind Eve called Methuselah in my notes: I know not on what authority. Looking up from these groups, however, to the roof painting, you will at once feel the imperfect grouping and ruder features of all the figures; and the greater depth of colour. We will dismiss these comparatively inferior paintings at once.

The roof and walls must be read together, each segment of the roof forming an introduction to, or portion of, the subject on the wall below. But the roof must first be looked at alone, as the work of Taddeo Gaddi, for the artistic qualities and failures of it.

I. In front, as you enter, is the compartment with the subject of the Resurrection. It is the traditional Byzantine composition: the guards

sleeping, and the two angels in white saying to the women, "He is not here," while Christ is seen rising with the flag of the Cross.

But it would be difficult to find another example of the subject, so coldly treated—so entirely without passion or action. The faces are expressionless; the gestures powerless. Evidently the painter is not making the slightest effort to conceive what really happened, but merely repeating and spoiling what he could remember of old design, or himself supply of commonplace for immediate need. The "Noli me tangere," on the right, is spoiled from Giotto, and others before him; a peacock, woefully plumeless and colourless, a fountain, an ill-drawn toy-horse, and two toy-children gathering flowers, are emaciate remains of Greek symbols. He has taken pains with the vegetation, but in vain. Yet Taddeo Gaddi was a true painter, a very beautiful designer, and a very amiable person. How comes he to do that Resurrection so badly?

In the first place, he was probably tired of a subject which was a great strain to his feeble imagination: and gave it up as impossible: doing simply the required figures in the required positions. In the second, he was probably at the time despondent and feeble because of his master's death. See Lord Lindsay, II. 273, where also it is pointed out that in the effect of the light proceeding from the figure of Christ, Taddeo Gaddi

indeed was the first of the Giottisti who showed true sense of light and shade. But until Lionardo's time the innovation did not materially affect Florentine art.

II. The Ascension (opposite the Resurrection, and not worth looking at, except for the sake of making more sure our conclusions from the first fresco). The Madonna is fixed in Byzantine stiffness, without Byzantine dignity.

III. The Descent of the Holy Ghost, on the left hand. The Madonna and disciples are gathered in an upper chamber: underneath are the Parthians, Medes, Elamites, etc., who hear them speak in their own tongues.

Three dogs are in the foreground—their mythic purpose the same as that of the two verses which affirm the fellowship of the dog in the journey and return of Tobias: namely, to mark the share of the lower animals in the gentleness given by the outpouring of the Spirit of Christ.

IV. The Church sailing on the Sea of the World. St. Peter coming to Christ on the water.

I was too little interested in the vague symbolism of this fresco to examine it with care,—the rather that the subject beneath, the literal contest of the Church with the world, needed more time for study in itself alone than I had for all Florence.

On this, and the opposite side of the chapel, are represented, by Simon Memmi's hand, the teaching power of the Spirit of God, and the saving

power of the Christ of God, in the world, according to the understanding of Florence in his time.

We will take the side of Intellect first, beneath the pouring forth of the Holy Spirit.

In the point of the arch beneath, are the three Evangelical Virtues. Without these, says Florence, you can have no science. Without Love, Faith, and Hope—no intelligence.

Under these are the four Cardinal Virtues, the entire group being thus arranged :—

A

B C

D E F G

A, Charity ; flames issuing from her head and hands.

B, Faith ; holds cross and shield, quenching fiery darts. This symbol, so frequent in modern adaptation from St. Paul's address to personal faith, is rare in older art.

C, Hope, with a branch of lilies.

D, Temperance ; bridles a black fish, on which she stands.

E, Prudence, with a book.

F, Justice, with crown and baton.

G, Fortitude, with tower and sword.

Under these are the great prophets and apostles : on the left,* David, St. Paul, St. Mark, St. John ;

* I can't find my note of the first one on the left ; answering to Solomon, opposite.

on the right, St. Matthew, St. Luke, Moses, Isaiah, Solomon. In the midst of the Evangelists, St. Thomas Aquinas, seated on a Gothic throne.

Now observe, this throne, with all the canopies below it, and the complete representation of the Duomo of Florence opposite, are of finished Gothic of Orcagna's school—later than Giotto's Gothic. But the building in which the apostles are gathered at the Pentecost is of the early Romanesque mosaic school, with a wheel window from the duomo of Assisi, and square windows from the Baptistery of Florence. And this is always the type of architecture used by Taddeo Gaddi: while the finished Gothic could not possibly have been drawn by him, but is absolute evidence of the later hand.

Under the line of prophets, as powers summoned by their voices, are the mythic figures of the seven theological or spiritual, and the seven *ge*ological or natural sciences: and under the feet of each of them, the figure of its Captain-teacher to the world.

The Seven Earthly Sciences begin with Grammar, on the right, farthest from the window, and are to be read towards the window, thus :—

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Grammar | (Under her) | Priscian. |
| 2. Rhetoric. | „ | Cicero. |
| 3. Logic. | „ | Aristotle. |
| 4. Music. | „ | Tubalcain. |
| 5. Astronomy. | „ | Atlas, King of Fesole. |
| 6. Geometry. | „ | Euclid. |
| 7. Arithmetic. | „ | Pythagoras. |

Then follow, read from right to left, the Heavenly Sciences thus :—

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Civil Law | (Under her) | The Emperor Justinian. |
| 2. Canon Law. | „ | Pope Clement V. |
| 3. Practical Theology. | „ | Peter Lombard. |
| 4. Contemplative Theology. | „ | Boethius. |
| 5. Dogmatic Theology. | „ | Dionysius the Areopagite. |
| 6. Mystic Theology. | „ | St. John Damascene. |
| 7. Polemic Theology. | „ | St. Augustine. |

Here, then, you have pictorially represented, the system of manly education, supposed in old Florence to be that necessarily instituted in great earthly kingdoms or republics, animated by the Spirit shed down upon the world at Pentecost. How long do you think it will take you, or ought to take, to see such a picture? We were to get to work this morning, as early as might be : you have probably allowed half an hour for Santa Maria Novella ; half an hour for San Lorenzo ; an hour for the museum of sculpture at the Bargello ; an hour for shopping ; and then it will be lunch time, and you mustn't be late, because you are to leave by the afternoon train, and must positively be in Rome to-morrow morning. Well, of your half-hour for Santa Maria Novella,—after Ghirlandajo's choir, Orcagna's transept, and Cimabue's Madonna, and the painted windows, have been seen properly, there will remain, suppose, at the utmost, a quarter of an hour for the Spanish

Chapel. That will give you two minutes and a half for each side, two for the ceiling, and three for studying Murray's explanations or mine. Two minutes and a half you have got, then—(and I observed, during my five weeks' work in the chapel, that English visitors seldom gave so much) —to read this scheme given you by Simon Memmi of human spiritual education. In order to understand the purport of it, in any the smallest degree, you must summon to your memory, in the course of these two minutes and a half, what you happen to be acquainted with of the doctrines and characters of Pythagoras, Aristotle, Dionysius the Areopagite, St. Augustine, and the emperor Justinian, and having further observed the expressions and actions attributed by the painter to these personages, judge how far he has succeeded in reaching a true and worthy ideal of them, and how large or how subordinate a part in his general scheme of human learning he supposes their peculiar doctrines properly to occupy. For myself, being, to my much sorrow, now an old person; and, to my much pride, an old-fashioned one, I have not found my powers either of reading or memory in the least increased by any of Mr. Stephenson's or Mr. Wheatstone's inventions; and though indeed I came here from Lucca in three hours instead of a day, which it used to take, I do not think myself able, on that account, to see any picture in Florence in

less time than it took formerly, or even obliged to hurry myself in any investigations connected with it.

Accordingly, I have myself taken five weeks to see the quarter of this picture of Simon Memmi's: and can give you a fairly good account of that quarter, and some partial account of a fragment or two of those on the other walls: but, alas! only of their pictorial qualities in either case; for I don't myself know anything whatever, worth trusting to, about Pythagoras, or Dionysius the Areopagite; and have not had, and never shall have, probably, any time to learn much of them; while in the very feeblest light only,—in what the French would express by their excellent word 'lueur,'—I am able to understand something of the characters of Atlas, Aristotle, and Justinian. But this only increases in me the reverence with which I ought to stand before the work of a painter, who was not only a master of his own craft, but so profound a scholar and theologian as to be able to conceive this scheme of picture, and write the divine law by which Florence was to live. Which Law, written in the northern page of this Vaulted Book, we will begin quiet interpretation of, if you care to return hither, to-morrow morning.